

THE ROSARY

25¢



MADE
EASY
FOR

Non-Catholics

BY

Rev. Raymond Sonnek, O.F.M.

ST. PAUL EDITIONS

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS:

It covers the whole of you, body and soul; it gathers you up, dedicates you, sanctifies you. It is the sign of the whole man and the sign of redemption. On the cross Our Lord redeemed all men. Through the cross He sanctified the whole man, to the very last fiber of his being.

That is why we cross ourselves before our prayers, so that the sign may pull us together and set us in order, may fix thoughts, hearts, and will in God.

Think of this when you make the sign of the cross. It is the holiest thing there is. Make it carefully, slowly; make a large one, with recollection, for then it embraces your whole being, body and soul, you, your thoughts and your will, imagination and feeling, doing and resting; and it will all be strengthened, stamped, consecrated in the power of Christ, in the name of the Holy Trinity.

Romano Guardini

Sacred Signs

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THE ROSARY

Made Easy for Non-Catholics

Many a pious soul outside of the Catholic Church prays to the Holy Spirit for guidance, but has very few prayers to choose from. The Catholic Church offers a wealth of diversified devotional thoughts on God, His love and His mysteries of salvation.

If you are a Protestant and have never witnessed the holy Sacrifice of the Mass in a Catholic Church, you have however seen most Catholics saying their beads of what is called the Rosary. You too would like to try this Prayer, but know not how to begin.

To save you the embarrassment of asking, the Rosary is fully explained for your convenience in the following pages.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

The Rosary is a prayer in honor of the Blessed Virgin, consisting of one hundred and fifty Hail Marys and fifteen Our Fathers. These are accompanied by meditation on the life, passion and glory of Christ.

It is divided into the joyful, the sorrowful and the glorious mysteries. In the joyful mysteries we meditate on

- (1) the Annunciation;
- (2) the Visitation;
- (3) the Birth of Jesus;
- (4) the Presentation; and
- (5) the Finding in the Temple.

In the sorrowful mysteries we meditate on

- (1) the Agony in the Garden;
- (2) the Scourging;
- (3) the Crown of thorns;
- (4) the Carrying of the Cross; and
- (5) the Crucifixion.

In the glorious mysteries we meditate on

- (1) the Resurrection;
- (2) the Ascension;
- (3) the Descent of the Holy Spirit;
- (4) the Assumption; and
- (5) the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin.

In the first centuries of Christianity there were many hermits who could not read the psalms in the psalter. So they used to substitute one Our Father and one Hail Mary for each psalm. To note the number, they made use of stones, or seeds strung on a cord.

The word Rosary means a garland or wreath of roses. Each prayer said in the Rosary is a spiritual rose offered to our Blessed Mother.

St. Dominic was the first to make general the custom of substituting 150 Hail Marys for the 150 Psalms.

The Rosary is a powerful prayer to obtain the grace of God through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. How innumerable are the conversions, known and unknown, which had their beginning in the devotion of the Rosary! Devout Christians make a practice of reciting it daily.

The very simplicity of the Rosary makes it a prayer for children. For this reason it is the prayer of the little and humble, and most pleasing in the eyes of God.

At the same time the Rosary is a prayer of contemplation: the truths discovered from meditation on the mysteries presented can never be exhausted by even the most learned.

Ordinarily, only one third of the Rosary is said: fifty Hail Marys and five Our Fathers prayed on a string of beads slipped through the fingers. The Rosary combines vocal with mental prayer. It is a summary of the most important parts of the Gospels, a most useful and powerful prayer. We might say at least five decades of the Rosary each day.

We begin the Rosary by making the sign of the Cross and saying the Apostles' Creed. Then we say one Our Father, three Hail Marys and one Glory be to the Father for the increase of faith, hope and charity.

We say the Our Father on the large beads and the Hail Marys on the small beads. One Our Father and the ten Hail Marys following, are called a decade. Five decades make the chaplet of beads. It is customary to close each decade with: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen."

While we say each decade, we should meditate upon one mystery of our faith. The Rosary is divided, as was mentioned above, into the joyful, the sorrowful and the glorious mysteries, each honoring respectively the life, passion and the glorification of Our Lord.

The objection is often made by non-Catholics that the Rosary is not a praiseworthy prayer because in it one prayer, the Hail Mary, is repeated so often. In reply to this objection we would say that one who has a feeling much at heart generally repeats over and over certain words that give expression to that feeling. Note a child begging for something. Besides, this practice has Holy Scripture itself, and even Our Lord, for a model. In the Psalms, the words "His mercy endureth forever" are repeated in only one psalm as many as twenty-seven times. The angels intimate that their song of "Holy, holy, holy Lord of hosts" is unceasing; in the Garden, Our Lord repeated His prayer.

We usually begin and end our prayers with the sign of the Cross. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14).

Nothing in the Catholic Church is begun, carried out, or completed without the sign of the Cross. It is used in innumerable blessings and ceremonials of the Church. The

sign of the Cross is the most common way of confessing our faith. It is believed that it had its origin in apostolic times.

We make the sign of the Cross by touching with the outstretched fingers of the right hand the forehead, then the breast, and then the left and right shoulders, saying: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." The left hand should be laid across the breast.

The sign should be made slowly, with great respect, as it is the sign of our salvation.

We make the sign of the Cross to express two important mysteries of the Christian religion: the Blessed Trinity and the Redemption.

When we say: In the name, we express the truth that there is only one God; when we say: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we express the truth that there are three distinct Persons in God. And when we make the form of the Cross on ourselves, we express the truth that the Son of God, made man, redeemed us by His death on the Cross.

By means of the sign of the Cross we obtain God's blessing and protection from dangers both spiritual and physical.



You may not believe what you have just read, but you do admire the persistent devotion of the Catholics saying their beads, and you are eager to know more of its practical application to your own needs. You have never said the Rosary, but are now willing to try it out, since not only Catholics but many pagan religions have some sort of a Rosary. Even if at first you do not believe the truth that Mary is the Virgin-Mother of God, at least you might show her some respect, for being the mother of Jesus, Whom you love as your divine Savior, she deserves your attention also. That you are a Protestant

should not make any difference. To help convince you to believe this great truth that Mary is the Mother of God, your own Protestant Bible may be of assistance and then compare Luke 1:26 with the same text and version of the Catholic Gospel.

The following Protestant version is taken from "The Complete Bible, An American Translation," The University of Chicago Press.

Luke 1:26: In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a maiden there who was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The maiden's name was Mary. And the angel went into the town and said to her:

"Good morning, favored woman! The Lord be with you!"

But she was startled at what he said, and wondered what this greeting meant. And the angel said to her:

"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have gained God's approval. You are to become a mother and you will give birth to a son, and you are to name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His forefather David, and He will reign over Jacob's house forever. His reign will have no end."

Mary said to the angel:

"How can this be, when I have no husband?"

The angel answered:

"The Holy Spirit will come over you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason your child will be called holy, and the Son of God.

And your relative, Elizabeth, although she is old, is going to give birth to a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was said to be barren. For nothing is ever impossible for God."

And Mary said: "I am the Lord's slave. Let it be as you say."

Then the angel left her.

The Catholic version is about the same.

Luke 1:26:

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel being come in, said unto her:

"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women."

Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said to her:

"Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father. And He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end."

And Mary said to the angel:

"How shall this be done, because I know not man?"

And the angel answering, said to her:

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren. Because no word shall be impossible with God."

And Mary said:

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word."

And the angel departed from her.

In view of such glowing praise from an angel of God you must, irrespective of your religious affiliation, infer that Mary was not an ordinary woman. According to the Protestant version she was "a favored woman who gained God's approval"; according to the Catholic version she was "a virgin, full of grace and blessed among women." She was the mother of Jesus, Whom you love because you believe Him to be God, your Savior. She was a Virgin before the birth of Jesus and remained a Virgin after His birth, for Joseph is not mentioned as having anything to do with the miraculous conception that took place in her womb. It was the Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High that had overshadowed her. Therefore she was a Virgin-Mother, pure and intact, immaculate and holy.

It will not be considered as below your dignity to be respectful to such a highly "favored" woman, nor any disgrace to greet her as the mother of Jesus, your Savior. Indeed you should do more. If you love Jesus, and all Protestants do, then you must also love Mary, His mother. You would respect the mother of the President of the United States, though that mother had nothing to do with his gaining the Presidency, for she gave birth only to a child who later became the honored President of our country.

With Mary it is more so. For Jesus was God before He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in her immaculate womb to become her child. Mary gave birth to a son, who from all eternity was also the Son of God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. The Gospel in both the Protestant and the Catholic version is most explicit on this point. It would be strange if you did not believe Mary to be the Virgin-Mother of God!

Think it over before you start to say the Rosary. And if it seems hard to believe such mysteries of salvation, remember that Faith takes the place of the lack of understanding and makes it easy for us to believe. Faith is a gift

of God freely given to all Catholics and Protestants alike. It is not and never can be the usual Protestant personal or private Belief, which is only a human opinion and has no relation to the supernatural value of Faith.

So if you have not yet procured a Rosary, get one from any Catholic religious goods store or borrow one from a Catholic friend, and begin a new life of love for God by honoring Mary with Him, Who first had honored and singled her out to be the Mother of His beloved Son, Jesus.

Kiss the Crucifix reverently and make the sign of the Cross. Remember, you begin the Rosary not in your name or under the auspices of your understanding, but in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, one God. Faith in the Blessed Trinity is common to both Catholics and Protestants, so it should not be hard, since nothing is required but your faith in the three distinct divine Persons of one God. In His name you act toward His glory. You are at prayer, as all children of God find themselves there at one time or another. How else could they prove even to themselves that they are children of God if they never prayed? God is no stranger to you; neither are you a stranger to Him even though you are not at present of the Fold of Jesus, but a Protestant. You would however be a stranger, if you refused to pray.

Blessing yourself with the sign of the Cross you devoutly begin: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Jesus had you in mind when He so lovingly expressed His divine desire of unity, saying: "And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10:16).

You have professed your faith in the three Divine Persons of one God, and already you feel closer in mind and in heart to the truth of the Catholic or universal devotion of

love. It is not degrading, but elevates the soul to the lofty contemplation of that supreme mystery of God's love for man.

In the name of the Blessed Trinity you may, for the moment, forget that you are a Protestant, for you can now approach God as one of His little children whom He loves no matter into what religion they have wandered on their own. You belong to Him; so let Him do the thinking while you simply confess your faith in Him by saying the Apostles' Creed.

I Believe

(1) I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth;

(2) And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;

(3) Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary;

(4) Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;

(5) He descended into hell, the third day He arose again from the dead;

(6) He ascended into Heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty;

(7) From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead;

(8) I believe in the Holy Spirit;

(9) The Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints;

(10) The forgiveness of sins;

(11) The resurrection of the body;

(12) And life everlasting. Amen.

*

The twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed contain the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, one God in three distinct Divine Persons: Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, with the particular operations attributed to each Person.

If you can believe all twelve articles expressed in the Apostles' Creed, you are no longer a Protestant but a true follower of the holy Apostles, attached like they, more closely to Jesus than to your favored religion or denomination. In time you shall also respect and love His Mother, as He expects all men to do.

Now you may recite one Our Father, either in your own Protestant version or from the Catholic text. Remember that this is not a sectarian Prayer, but was taught by Christ Himself to us through His Apostles at their request.

Protestant version:

This, therefore, is the way you are to pray:

Our Father in heaven, Your name be revered!

Your kingdom come!

Your will be done

on earth as well as in heaven!

Give us today bread for the day,

And forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors.

And do not subject us to temptation.

But save us from the evil one.

(Matt. 6:9; The University of Chicago Press.)

Catholic version:

Thus therefore shall you pray:

Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. Amen. (Matt. 6:9.)

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At this point we come to the most embarrassing moment for any Protestant concerning his knowledge or rather

lack of information about the Blessed Virgin Mary. Most Protestants have never heard of her and few have ever thought that she might be the Mother of all her Protestant children! Ever since the unfortunate separation from the Catholic Church, they have been wandering like forgotten orphans, loving God the Father, and accepting His beloved Son Jesus as their Savior, but not having that Mother for whom the Holy Spirit has such tender love, which He wishes to share with all the children of God, no matter what their religious affiliation might be.

The Rosary will acquaint them with this "favored woman" and bring them closer in faith and love until they happily recognize in her their own sweet Mother. What happiness shall fill their lonely hearts when they find out that they have been orphans only in their own estimation! For though they have unknowingly repudiated her, she has never rejected them, always longing for the moment of their reconciliation to shower them more abundantly with her love and affection, just as her divine Son did when, forsaken by all, He asked His heavenly Father to forgive them, "for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

As a Protestant, you have never said a prayer to Mary, because your religion had failed to bring and present her to you as your long-lost Mother. So you must accept the Catholic prayers which are innumerable, and may fit into your private devotion to Mary.

If you cannot fully believe what the Catholic Church expresses in her prayers to the Blessed Mother of God, let not that deter you from using them. At least pretend to say the prayer as if you did believe in what you say. The grace of God works in diverse ways, accepting the good faith and good will as a start. Your pretense shall not be considered a hypocrisy, because it truly comes from your heart.

Try to get used to the "Hail Mary," for you will soon keep on repeating it until love develops your initial faith

into a mature supernatural Belief, and then it will come readily as a sweet greeting to the Mother of God and your own Mother.

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

*

The "Hail Mary," called also the Angelical Salutation in English and Ave Maria in Latin, has two parts: the first is a prayer of praise. It is composed of (a) the words of the archangel Gabriel to Mary; and (b) the words of Elizabeth, her cousin, to Mary. The angel Gabriel said to her: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28). The words of Elizabeth are: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb" (Luke 1:42).

The first two words: "Hail, Mary," mean; I salute thee, or as we would say today: "Good morning!" or "hello!" By this we testify our reverence and our respect for our Blessed Mother and congratulate her on her privileges: "He has regarded the lowliness of His hand-maid; for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (Luke 1:48).

"Full of grace," means that Mary is the most holy and exalted of all creatures, possessed of all graces and gifts of God. She is the only one of all mortals who was conceived free from all stain of original sin. This is why we speak of Mary's Immaculate Conception.

"The Lord is with thee," signifies that, although all good persons are united with God, Mary in a special manner is more closely united with Him in love and power. Mary was united with God even on earth in the closest union; she was like a tabernacle containing God, except

that while the tabernacle only shelters Our Lord, her spirit and His were one, and even her blood and His were one.

"Blessed art thou among women," means that Mary has been privileged among all women, being the Mother of the Son of God. She is therefore higher in holiness, grace and glory than any other woman. Mary was blessed because the Son born of her brought her blessings. She is blessed as one who cooperated in the salvation of men; even on earth she received the homage of angels and men.

"And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus," means that Mary is blessed because of her Son. All her glory and power come from Him, God Who became her Son. Mary is like a tree that bears good fruit; can any fruit be better than the Son of God!

The second part of the "Hail Mary" is a prayer of petition, and was composed by the Church. In it we entreat Mary's intercession. Mary, of all human beings, shared most in the bitter sufferings of her Son for the salvation of men. She cannot be deaf to our petitions for help to attain eternal salvation. She knows what her Son suffered for us.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners." We call ourselves sinners, for no man, except the Blessed Virgin, can be free from all sin. Knowing what power a mother, and especially the mother of God has over her Son, we beg Mary to pray for us. There is no sinner so low that Mary will refuse to entreat mercy for him if he is contrite.

"Now, and at the hour of our death. Amen." We ask Mary to obtain for us during life the gift of the love of God, and at the hour of death that help we shall need to enable us to save our soul. The hour of death is the time above all times when we need help most. At that hour we may probably be racked by physical suffering which tempts us to forget God; we may very likely be attacked

by the devil, by temptation when we are weakest. We may be overwhelmed by fear of God. And so we plead with Mary to obtain for us the grace we shall need most.

The word "Amen" with which we end our prayer means: So it is or, So it be; the word expresses our confidence that our petitions will be granted.

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Could you now on such short notice speak as a Protestant to the "favored woman" and greet her kindly with a "Good Morning!" or "Hello!" or more preferably in the Catholic way: "Hail Mary, full of grace!"

If you tried hard, perhaps you could recite the whole prayer three times, asking Mary for the increase of faith, hope and charity. Not for the Catholic or Protestant faith, but just the true Faith. In the end you will discover that the Catholic faith is the only true Faith, for truth can only be one. You may not entirely believe that Mary is the Mother of God and your Mother also, but she is both, and in time you may so believe, for the grace of God is always active and ready to help men to find the truth.

First, however, you must get acquainted with this "favored woman" who was the Virgin-Mother of Jesus, Whom you love and accept as your divine Savior. It may seem strange that you should ask for the increase of faith, since you think that you have all the faith you need. But what you have and what you share with other Protestant religions is only a natural, private or personal faith which cannot save. You ask Mary for a supernatural Faith which can only be infused, not acquired by any human means. Faith, hope and charity are three divine virtues necessary for salvation. They come from God, and Mary only asks for them in your behalf.

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If you have said the three Hail Marys, give thanks to the Blessed Trinity, one God, in whose name you have begun to say the Rosary.

Bow your head in deep reverence and say with dignity, attention and devotion the following "Glory":

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

*

What joy there must be in heaven on hearing a Protestant child of God saying what Catholics in their prayerful devotion keep on saying to Him and to His Mother!

You are well on your way of saying the Rosary. To help you meditate on the various mysteries, hold the large bead in your fingers on which you will recite the Our Father followed by ten Hail Marys; then follow in mind the development of the first joyful mystery:

THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES

The First Joyful Mystery:

The Annunciation

Think of that moment when an angel of God was sent to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, and the maiden's name was Mary. Both lived in a small town of Galilee, called Nazareth. Recall what the angel in all the seriousness of his high mission said to her, and what she said to him.

Nothing like this has ever happened and shall never happen again. Can you refuse to listen, just because you are a Protestant? What difference can it make, since God's truth is for all men!

The world's salvation depended on that momentous conversation between the angel and Mary, especially on her answer. Heaven and earth listened and with drawn breath awaited the outcome of that conversation as the strange mystery of God's love for man was being unfolded in that little town of Galilee, called Nazareth! Who would

not care to listen? The Annunciation brought joy to all men irrespective of their race, color or religion.

If you have come thus far in saying one Our Father and ten Hail Marys followed by Glory be to the Father, and meditated upon the first joyful mystery: the Annunciation, you will no longer, by the grace of God, wish to back down, but will manage somehow to say all five decades (5 Our Fathers and 50 Hail Marys followed by Glory be to the Father after each decade).

You have been greeting the Blessed Virgin in all the sincerity of your Protestant faith; you have called her the Mother of God, acknowledging yourself a sinner, and you humbly asked her to pray for you. It was less difficult than you imagined it would be and you have not lost face with your own religion. On the contrary, you have added something very precious to your religion, namely a kernel of truth and a little more of love for God.

The Second Joyful Mystery:

The Visitation

The moment Mary had consented to the words of the angel the miraculous conception of Jesus took place in her immaculate womb by the cooperation of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High.

Singing with joy her neighborly spirit prompted her to visit her cousin Elizabeth, of whom the angel had spoken and who lived in the hill country in a city of Juda, in order to help at the birth of the long-awaited son, John, later to be called the Baptist. Carrying her own precious fruit, she hurried into the hill country, and entering into the house of Zachary, saluted Elizabeth.

Immediately wonderful things began to happen:

And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

And she cried out with a loud voice, and said: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?"

"For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.

"And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord" (Luke 1:39).

Then Mary in her turn raised her voice in that inspired hymn called "Magnificat" in Latin:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

"Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy is His name. And His mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear Him.

"He hath showed might in His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.

"He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away.

"He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever" (Luke 1:46).

Two holy women filled with the Holy Spirit praising God—that is what the second joyful mystery: the Visitation, brings to the mind deep in prayer. Learn the "Magnificat" by heart and recite it daily in honor of God and in praise of your newly found Mother. Jesus will bless you for such thoughtful remembrance of the lovable mystery of salvation.

You again end your prayer of the second decade of the holy Rosary by saying: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

The Third Joyful Mystery:

The Birth of Jesus

The mystery of Christmas is known to everybody. It is however the great mystery of God's love for man and worth contemplating not only during the Christmas Holiday, but on any occasion. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the eternal Word of God, is made flesh in the womb of Mary, takes on human nature and becomes her little child, true God and true man. It is a mystery of joy, because it is the divine mystery of God's love for man. The Rosary puts Christ back into Christmas. Here is proof that Mary is truly the Mother of God, for she gave birth to a child that already was the Son of God from all eternity. A miraculous fact, but nevertheless an historical fact enacted in the little town of Bethlehem. An abandoned stable became the palace and a lowly crib the throne of the Most High God, and Mary with Joseph were the first true adorers on earth. No argumentation can ever take away the value of this fact. The sooner you yield to God's Faith in believing this to be true, the closer shall the Rosary bring you in contact with the eternal values of salvation.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Fourth Joyful Mystery:

The Presentation

Here, too, wonderful things happened in the temple, where Mary and Joseph brought the Child Jesus to present Him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord: Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord. And to offer a sacrifice according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons (Luke 2:23).

They were met there by two saintly persons, an old man named Simeon and an elderly woman, a widow named Anna, both saying strange things about the Child Jesus and His future:

And behold there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was in him. And he had received an answer from the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord.

And he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when His parents brough in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he also took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said:

"Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace. Because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples.

"A light to the revelation of the gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

And His father and mother were wondering at those things, which were spoken concerning Him.

And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary, His mother: "Behold this Child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow until fourscore and four years; who departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day.

Now she at the same hour coming in, confessed to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel.

And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their city Nazareth.

And the Child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom, and the grace of God was in Him (Luke 2:25).

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This is what is meant by the fourth joyful mystery: the Presentation. The law of Moses was fulfilled to the letter; two saintly persons gave public testimony to the Child Jesus in an inspired manner. You may wonder at the things spoken, but Mary and Joseph were also surprised and “wondered at the words concerning Him.” Everything concerning Jesus was a mystery, revealed only by the Holy Spirit not for our understanding, but for our faith. We must believe, because Faith is more important than mere human knowledge. And some day the Protestant world shall come to the full realization of this fact in God’s plan of salvation.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Fifth Joyful Mystery:

The Finding in the Temple

When Jesus was twelve years old He went with Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem, making the annual pilgrimage at the solemn day of the pasch, according to the custom of the feast. When they were ready to go home, He could not be found either among their kinsfolks or acquaintances and was lost for three days. On the third day they found Him in the Temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking questions.

And seeing Him, they wondered. And His mother said to Him: “Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.”

And He said to them: "How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

And they understood not the word that He spoke unto them. But His mother kept all these words in her heart (Luke 2:41).

Thus they found Jesus in the Temple and could not make out the meaning of His divine words about His Father's business.

We too cannot understand God, but that should not surprise anyone, for God is full of mysteries, which we must accept on His word. It would be strange if we refused to believe what God tells us to believe. The Protestant world is often thus guilty when it insists on knowing and understanding every revealed truth. If we put our trust in men concerning most things of our life, why would we not believe God implicitly without any doubt and without asking for explanation?

Jesus was found in the temple concerned about His Father's business; and there He also wishes to be found by us in our everyday life. For though God is everywhere, Jesus prefers to be found in the Catholic Church, where under the species of bread and wine He is fully alive and still concerned about His Father's business, namely of bringing all men to the truth of salvation. His desire is to have one Fold and one Shepherd in order to stop all conflicting opinions about the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, which He brought down from heaven and commanded all nations to seek in the Church which He Himself built upon the Rock of Peter. That is His guarantee of the truthfulness of Faith.

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You have come to the end of the Rosary's first decade: the five joyful mysteries. Give glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the be-

ginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Kiss the crucifix and bless yourself with the sign of the Cross, for you have been privileged to honor God through a worthy devotion to His Blessed Mother. It did not hurt your feelings steeped in Protestant sentiments of long standing, to meditate on these eternal values of salvation. The holy Rosary brought you closer to God's truth, which as you must know, is only one. The Catholic Church welcomes you in the name of Jesus to do something constructive in bringing His divine wish to fulfillment, namely that there be one Fold and one Shepherd for all mankind: "And other sheep I have, that are **not** of this fold; them also **I must bring**, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10:16).

You have said the Lord's Prayer five times and fifty times have you greeted that "favored woman," Mary, the Virgin-Mother of Jesus, acknowledging her to be the Mother of God and your Mother also. In the eyes of Jesus you have become precious, as all are who thus honor His beloved Mother.

On another day you may be urged by the grace of God to say the full Rosary of one hundred and fifty Hail Marys, or five decades. The custom is to say the joyful mysteries on Mondays and Thursdays; the sorrowful mysteries on Tuesdays and Fridays; the glorious mysteries on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Thus the whole week may be devoutly spent in conversation with God and His Blessed Mother, giving glory where it belongs and becoming "true adorers of the Father": "The hour cometh, and now is, when true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeketh such to adore Him. God is Spirit, and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23).

THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

The First Sorrowful Mystery:

The Agony in the Garden

Picture to yourself our Lord withdrawing from His Apostles to face the Agony by Himself and to drink of the bitter chalice alone. This act of courtesy shows the ineffable goodness of Jesus always trying to remove sadness from others. He craved no pity, but wished only that people would think more on their relation with God, and He endeavored to do good. He will tell the women not to weep for Him, but for themselves and for their children. At this moment He is fighting the great fight with Himself, crying out in agony: "Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me. But yet not My will, but Thine be done" (Luke 22:42).

In this awful fight His sweat became "as drops of blood trickling upon the ground," while His beloved Apostles fell asleep for sorrow. How often we imitate them and, instead of being wakeful and alert in prayer we sleep and lose our opportunity for any good in the future. When things go wrong, Jesus is our only example to follow. The only thing He asks, is: "Why sleep you? arise, pray, lest you enter into temptation" (Luke 22:46).

He was to be betrayed with a kiss from one of His chosen Apostles for thirty pieces of silver and sold as a captive to sinful men. No wonder His agony was not imaginary but a real torture to His divine dignity! How little we sympathize with our Lord in His terrible agony, especially when we throw the whole burden of our salvation upon His weary shoulders and are unwilling to lift a finger to alleviate His suffering. We do no Penance; we choose a religion which demands no obligation to bear the burden of the Cross, seeking comforts instead of following the Master no matter where He may lead.

This way of life is far removed from the Life of Jesus, and we ought to look into it more seriously, because salvation is a serious business of our heavenly Father.

The Second Sorrowful Mystery:

The Scourging

Bodily punishment, especially through whipping or scourging at the post, is an insult to any adult person. Jesus, being falsely adjudged a criminal, was beaten up severely by men who thought themselves better than He, their God and Savior. We meditate upon this cruel injustice and insult to God by sinful men. We express our profound sorrow that through our own transgressions we have been among the number of the scourgers. The ten Hail Marys are to plead with His Mother for us sinners and to beg forgiveness and pardon. The Rosary points out the Way of the Cross for us to follow in the footsteps of our Lord to be of some help to Him in His hour of trial. We do love Him and we shall try to prove that love by taking up our Cross without expecting any unnecessary comforts from our religion. We shall abandon that religion rather than Jesus, if it cannot consider Christ's yoke to be sweet and the burden light. No religion that has been founded by men can be the true Religion of God. Therefore we shall adhere to Jesus and do whatever He tells us to accomplish in life. If He wants us to enter His own fold in the Catholic Church, we shall do so in order to be with Him now and forever.

The Third Sorrowful Mystery:

The Crown of Thorns

The tormentors of Jesus were exceptionally cruel. That one man can do such atrociously cruel things to another fellow-man can only be the result of sin, which debases the better qualities of human nature and makes

it bestial, on account of the mind that can invent different punishments to augment the pain. This crowning with thorns was a masterpiece of atrocity, for Jesus, having been acclaimed the King of the Jews, was to be crowned in derision with a crown of thorns that pierced His brain with pain and suffering.

Jesus bore all this with infinite patience, because He bore it for our sake. How good is our beloved Master even when He is the Man of Sorrows! Shall not we also bear a little suffering for His sake and stop complaining at the Commandments of God and His Holy Church? Seeking relief in a religion that offers no guarantee of God's truth, but only suggests a comfortable life of "do and believe as you please and have a church of your own choice" will not satisfy a mind that wishes to become a "true adorer of the Father." The Catholic Church binds the consciences of men to do the will of God, because she alone has been commissioned by Christ to preach, not her own, but His doctrine of Penance.

The Fourth Sorrowful Mystery:

The Carrying of the Cross

As though digging His own grave Jesus was forced to carry the instrument of His death without sympathy from the crowd which He fed with miraculously multiplied bread in the desert. How quickly people forget God's favors!

God's will demands that all men carry their Cross and follow Jesus even unto Calvary. Fashionable religions have not come from God. Therefore we must seek the one and only that has a divine origin. The decisions we so proudly make for Christ are not sufficient in themselves to open the gates of heaven while we stand by without doing any Penance, worshipping at an empty altar and care not for His precious Body and Blood, being satisfied with the mere

commemoration of the Last Supper by eating common bread. Oh, how the burdened Heart of Jesus yearns for our conversion that we might relieve Him somewhat of carrying the Cross alone!

The Fifth Sorrowful Mystery:

The Crucifixion

Behold poor bleeding Jesus barely making His Way up the steep incline of Calvary, where He was to be nailed to the Cross. Here He died for our sins. The blood of Abel cried out to heaven for vengeance, but the Blood of Jesus cried only for more mercy, forgiveness and pardon. How good is God and what sacrifice He made for us! If He had simply forgiven us and dispensed with the bitter passion and death upon the Cross, we would not appreciate His love and in time would entirely forget Him and His goodness. But the Crucifixion is a daily reminder to all men and no one can say that he has been forsaken or forgotten by God. The blood of Jesus is constantly crying out for mercy, especially for those who have gone astray. If nothing else can convert the world to God, the Crucifixion should be able to accomplish this tremendous miracle of God's grace.

The Catholic Church alone keeps re-enacting the passion and death of our Lord in every holy sacrifice of the Mass, and yet so many people fail to participate through their lack of Faith. The conflicting personal Beliefs all seem to be against such repetition of God's mystery of love and the Crucifixion of our Lord makes little impression upon their souls. They are against it just because it is performed in the Catholic Church, forgetting that their forefathers were all good Catholics and worshipped God not at an empty altar, but in spirit and in truth, being the "true adorers of the heavenly Father."

May Mary, the Virgin-Mother of Jesus, hence the Mother of God, bring enlightenment of the true faith to all those who belong to Jesus but are not yet brought into His Fold. Jesus speaks of them: "I must bring them, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10:16).

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

The First Glorious Mystery:

The Resurrection

Something wonderful happened after the Body of Jesus was taken down from the Cross and laid in the tomb. On the third day early in the morning He arose from the dead, because He was not only man, but God, true God and true man. He is our eternal hope that if we suffer with Him we shall also be glorified with Him (Rom. 8:17). Nobody likes Penance, suffering, sickness and pain, but these are but steps toward our future glorification. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). We may expect our own resurrection by believing in the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior. The Rosary brings these glorious tidings to our attention and points to heaven as our destination. Too many people prefer the things of the world to the things God has prepared for those that love Him. Salvation is begun on earth, but consummated only in heaven when we reach the Home of our Father. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Mat 22:32). And the only true Faith that gives us Life is the divine Faith of the Catholic Church.

The Second Glorious Mystery:

The Ascension

Jesus had come from heaven and now when the business of His Father has been successfully accomplished, He could go back Home.

The Rosary reminds us of our obligations to God, especially to believe everything He wishes us to believe. He appointed Mary as the Mother of His Son on earth; therefore we must believe that she is the Mother of God. We cannot be excused by saying that we cannot understand such distinction being given to a creature, because understanding has nothing to do with Faith. We must simply believe, because God says so. If you have not so believed, the Rosary will remind you again and again of this obligation. These are all mysteries of God's love for man, and mysteries they must remain.

The Third Glorious Mystery:

The Descent of the Holy Spirit

Catholics and Protestants alike believe in the Holy Spirit. The Rosary reminds us of our Lord's promise to His Apostles to send them another Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, and the third glorious mystery brings back to mind the moment of His descent: "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:2).

This wonderful mystery is being repeated daily, though not in such a manifest manner, upon all who are in the state of grace, irrespective of their particular religion. God is no respecter of persons. If you are worthy of His divine grace, you shall be filled with innumerable

gifts of His love. It is only necessary to believe and accept God's truth, no matter how hard it may be for us to believe. The Catholic Church stands before us as a model of obedience to God's will. As a Protestant you must divest yourself of your own private personal Beliefs in order to come closer to God's truth. Saying the Rosary and asking Mary to pray and intercede for you in this respect brings out your faith, which makes you and your petitions pleasing to God.

The Fourth Glorious Mystery:

The Assumption

All Catholics believe that Mary was taken up to heaven body and soul. Most Protestants fail in this respect for no apparent reason. Every reason points to the fact that the virgin body which sheltered the Son of God could never be committed to the grave and corruption. Mary was conceived without sin, lived without sin and never deserved the punishment for sin. Her body and soul both were without a stain of sin. If her Son evaded corruption, she, His Mother, also deserved the same distinction of being rescued from the grave and taken up to heaven with glorified body and soul.

Once you believe that Mary was the Mother of Jesus, Who was God, you must also believe her to be the Mother of God, and as such her place could not be in the grave separated from her Son, but in heaven with Him for all eternity. Time was shortened for her and her death was only like a passing sleep, after which she awoke in the arms of her beloved Son in heaven.

Remember this, like all else, is a mystery of God's love for man. So do not try to figure out how this could ever have happened. Faith simply believes, and such Faith God demands of all men.

The Fifth Glorious Mystery:

The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin

This mystery should not be hard to believe, since it only reveals what we would expect God to do for that "favored woman" or that Virgin-Mother of His divine Son. Having honored her on earth, He showered all the wealth of His love upon her, making her the Queen of angels and all the Saints of heaven. She is most powerful in her intercession for those still living on earth. If your Protestant religion forbids you to believe such mysteries of God's love for man, remember that God's plan of salvation surpasses all human understanding, and His truth must prevail.

You are a child of the heavenly Father, no matter in what religion you have involved yourself. His will should be your command. If He wants you to enter the Fold of His beloved Son Jesus, established for all nations and all peoples with their particular religions and Beliefs upon the Rock of Peter, to make it easier for all to see the truth, then you should do all in your power to obey His divine will notwithstanding what others may think. You lose nothing by forsaking error for the truth, and you gain not only self-respect, but the true freedom of a child of God.

Pray the Rosary and acknowledge Mary as the Mother of God that you may with greater humility confess yourself to be a sinner who asks her for intercession before the throne of God now and at the hour of death. Amen.

